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SUSTAINABILITY, SOCIAL EQUITY AND THE IDEA OF THE GOOD CITY IN POST-INDUSTRIAL AMERICA

ALAN MALLACH*

INTRODUCTION

With few if any exceptions, older manufacturing-dominated American cities saw a consistent, often precipitous, path of decline from the 1950s to the 1980s. This trend was driven by long-term national and global trends, dominated by suburbanization, regional population shifts from the northeast and Midwest to the Sun Belt, and beginning in the 1970s, deindustrialization.¹ These trends, although not caused by governmental actions, were exacerbated by construction of the interstate highway system and FHA mortgage policies, as well as by the failure of the ill-conceived urban renewal experiment.² While decline was the norm, since the 1990s, though, things have been different. During the past two decades, some older and by now post-industrial cities have shown significant signs of revival, while others have continued to decline, falling further and further behind.³

This is true in broad outline, but also misleading. While some formerly industrial cities are clearly doing better than others—Pittsburgh is frequently cited—all of the major post-industrial cities have seen *some* change and some degree of revival since the 1990s. Cleveland as a whole may be struggling, yet parts of it are dynamic and thriving; even Detroit, the most devastated of major American cities, has pockets of revival.⁴ This has prompted some writers to herald the revival of the American city in unequivocal, even triumphal tones.⁵

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1. See generally ROBERT A. BEAUREGARD, *WHEN AMERICA BECAME SUBURBAN* (2006); DOLORES HAYDEN, *BUILDING SUBURBIA: GREEN FIELDS AND URBAN GROWTH, 1820–2000* (2003).

2. See Robert A. Beauregard, *Federal Policy and Postwar Urban Decline: A Case of Complicity?*, 12 HOUS. POL’Y DEBATE 129, 129–30, 135–36 (2001).

3. See ALAN MALLACH & LAVEA BRACHMAN, *REGENERATING AMERICA’S LEGACY CITIES* 10 (2013).

4. See *id.* at 20 (providing comparative analysis of the social and economic conditions of selected older American cities, including Cleveland and Detroit); ABIR ALI ET AL., *7.2 SQUARE MILES: A REPORT ON GREATER DOWNTOWN DETROIT* 12–13, 58, 64, 66–71 (2013).

5. ANN BREEN & DICK RIGBY, *INTOWN LIVING: A DIFFERENT AMERICAN DREAM*, at VI (2004); PAUL GROGAN & TONY PROSCIO, *COMEBACK CITIES: A BLUEPRINT FOR URBAN*

The triumphal narrative is equally misleading. What has happened, particularly since 2000, is that these cities have become increasingly bipolar cities with revival taking place in certain parts of the city, while other parts of the city are not only not benefiting from the revival, but also falling further behind.⁶ Spatial, economic and social disparities are becoming more, rather than less, pronounced as revival takes place.⁷ As will be discussed later, the same is true of St. Louis.

This complex setting, with its juxtaposition of revival and decline, prosperity and poverty, is the starting point from which I will explore questions of sustainability and social equity in American cities, beginning with a seemingly straightforward but actually quite complex preliminary question; namely, what is a city? After presenting a framework for thinking about sustainability and social equity in the context of urban revival, I will conclude by raising a mirror to St. Louis, as a representative example of the early twenty-first century post-industrial American city.

WHAT THEN IS A CITY?

Borrowing from moral philosophy, I would suggest that where we are heading is toward a way of defining the good city, as a way in turn of framing a vision of what truly constitutes urban revival or revitalization. To do so, however, we must begin with the question of what is, in fact, a city?⁸

Defining a city is reminiscent of the parable of the blind men and the elephant. To the city's economic development director, a city may be the number of jobs and businesses it contains. To the director of a community development corporation, it may be the quality of life in the neighborhood they serve, or the quality of its housing stock.⁹ To the city treasurer, it may be the

NEIGHBORHOOD REVIVAL 1 (2000). See CHRISTOPHER LEINBERGER, THE OPTION OF URBANISM: INVESTING IN A NEW AMERICAN DREAM 5–11 (2008).

6. See ASS'N OF EUR. SCHS. OF PLANNING & ASS'N OF COLLEGIATE SCHS. OF PLANNING, AESOP/ACSP 5TH JOINT CONGRESS 2013: PLANNING FOR RESILIENT CITIES AND REGIONS, EBOOK OF ABSTRACTS 920 (2013) [hereinafter EBOOK OF ABSTRACTS] (summarizing the author's ongoing research, which includes tracking revitalization and change in spatial, social, and economic distribution between 2000 and 2010, which was presented in the summer of 2013 at the ACSP-AESOP conference in Dublin, Ireland).

7. *Id.*

8. This is a question that has been long pondered, and one which Lewis Mumford, arguably the leading American urban thinker of the twentieth century, addressed in an essay "What is a City?" which appeared in the *Architectural Record* in 1937. In that essay, he defined the city in far more elegant I have above, writing that "the city, in its complete sense, is a geographic plexus, an economic organization, an institutional process, a theater of social action, and an aesthetic symbol of collective unity." Lewis Mumford, *What is a City?*, in *ARCHITECTURAL RECORD* 94 (1937), available at http://www.contemporaryurbananthropology.com/pdfs/Mumford,%20What%20is%20a%20City_.pdf.

9. *Id.*

sum of revenue coming in, while to a sports fan it's where his favorite sports teams play. All of these are, of course, patently inadequate. Stepping away from the philosophical plane, I would suggest that a minimum definition of a city must incorporate at least four different dimensions:

- The city is an economic entity, the sum of its economic strength and resources, and the jobs and business opportunities it offers.
- The city is a social or demographic entity, made up of the people who live in the city, their connections and relationships; and perhaps, albeit to a lesser extent, those who occupy it more briefly, such as commuters and visitors.
- The city is a physical entity, its geography, the vitality of its neighborhoods, the quality of its environment, and the soundness of its infrastructure.
- The city is a political entity, an entity within legally-defined boundaries, containing a local government, with the public resources, capacity, and leadership it provides.

Any effort to formulate a strategy for a sustainable city needs to take all four dimensions into account. It must also address the knotty issue of justice, which cuts across all of the city's many dimensions. I would suggest that a sustainable city must be a just city, according to how the term has been formulated by Susan Fainstein.¹⁰ That formulation can be encapsulated in a tripartite proposition: whether the city furthers democracy, diversity, and equity.¹¹ I can think of no better way than this to characterize what is meant by sustainability as a social paradigm: whether the city is one that fosters—that is, does more than merely accommodate—diversity, and does so in an equitable fashion, in which public resources and opportunities are equitably shared and available to all.

Since the term “sustainability” emerged from environmental discourse, it is not surprising that economic sustainability often is used to define an approach to economic growth that is environmentally sustainable, in the sense of energy use, pollution, or resource depletion.¹² That definition, which appears often in the sustainability literature in one guise or another, is not really about economic growth as much as it is about the economic context of environmental sustainability. I suggest economic sustainability needs to be defined differently if it is to be meaningful in the context of urban revitalization.

10. SUSAN S. FAINSTEIN, *THE JUST CITY* 165 (2010).

11. *Id.*

12. John Ikerd, *The Three Ecological Principles of Economic Sustainability*, CORP. SOC. RESP. WIRE (Feb. 11, 2013), <http://www.csrwire.com/blog/posts/713-the-three-ecological-principles-of-economic-sustainability>.

I would define an economically sustainable city as one that competes successfully in the regional, national and even global marketplace so that it produces enough—whether through production of goods or delivery of services—to foster an economically vital city and provide jobs and opportunities for its residents; and does so in a fashion that is environmentally sustainable and equitable, while being capable of adapting to changes in technology and in the larger economy. The latter point raises a related issue, that of resilience, another term that has been adapted—in this case from the sphere of disaster response—to urban policy.¹³ No economic engine is immune to change; industrial cities that thrived from the mid-nineteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries did so in large part because they were resilient, and able to adapt to changes in demand and technology.¹⁴ Today's cities, as they try to rebuild their economies, are likely to face future challenges, which by their nature cannot be anticipated today; their long-term future will depend heavily on their ability to adapt as those challenges emerge.

CONCEPTUALIZING URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

Based on this framework, and the four dimensions by which the city can be defined, it then becomes possible to frame a series of questions which can then be used to assess whether a city can be considered, or is on a path to becoming, a sustainable city. That in turn can lead to an operational definition of what a sustainable city, which is also a just city, might actually look like.

- (1) Does the city contain and sustain a level of export-driven economic activity capable of supporting a stable or growing population, creating jobs for those who need and want them, and linking effectively to the regional economy?

This is a threshold issue, and I would argue that no city can be sustainable unless it has a well-functioning economy effectively competing at a regional or wider level, generating export goods or services. No city can prosper solely by providing goods and services to itself; as someone once said, 'no community ever got rich by people taking in one another's laundry.'¹⁵ Autarchy, however

13. THE RESILIENT CITY: HOW MODERN CITIES RECOVER FROM DISASTER 9 (Lawrence J. Vale & Thomas J. Campanella eds., 2005); DANIEL P. ALDRICH, BUILDING RESILIENCE: SOCIAL CAPITAL IN POST-DISASTER RECOVERY 7 (2012).

14. See ALAN MALLACH, FED. RESERVE BANK OF PHILA., IN PHILADELPHIA'S SHADOW: SMALL CITIES IN THE THIRD FEDERAL RESERVE DISTRICT 13–23, 26–27 (2012); JOHN T. CUMBLER, A SOCIAL HISTORY OF ECONOMIC DECLINE: BUSINESS, POLITICS AND WORK IN TRENTON 1–8 (1989) (exploring industrial resilience during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in Trenton, New Jersey).

15. See Larry Bunce, Op-Ed., *Creating Jobs Means Restructuring Economy*, CHI. TRIB., July 8, 2010, available at http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2010-07-08/news/chi-100708bunce_briefs_1_new-jobs-manufacturing-jobs-other-s-laundry (discussing the origin of this phrase); Lynne E. Browne, *Taking In Each Other's Laundry—The Service Economy*, NEW ENG. ECON. REV., July –

attractive it may seem to those nostalgic for a symbolic off-the-grid existence, is not a viable strategy for economic vitality anywhere, and least of all in cities which are disproportionately poor and under-resourced. Import substitution activities, such as attracting a supermarket to an underserved neighborhood, may be valuable tools in enhancing a city's quality of life, but are ultimately dependent on export industries for their viability and should not be confused with sustainable economic development.¹⁶

To the extent that the city or its region has a viable economy, or is moving in that direction, the principal corollary questions address the central issue of how the benefits of that economy are distributed.

- (2) Are the benefits of the city's economy available to everyone, particularly the city's lower income residents?
- (3) Does the city provide its residents with the skills and education to enable them to compete successfully in the regional economy?
- (4) In the final analysis, is the city a locus of opportunity for upward mobility and self-improvement?

These last three issues go to what can be broadly termed the city's *opportunity structure*.¹⁷ The opportunity structure integrates not only the extent to which jobs and business opportunities are available across a broad spectrum of skills and areas, but the quality of the local public education system, the availability of good-quality vocational and technical training, the quality of the city and regional transportation systems, and the receptivity of the community to innovation and to different cultures and lifestyles.¹⁸

A third group of questions go to the dimension of the city as a physical entity.

- (5) Are the city's neighborhoods competitive in the regional economy; or, put differently, do the city and its neighborhoods offer a quality of life that holds existing households and draws more people to live there rather than elsewhere?

Aug. 1986, at 20, 20 (The phrase received considerable circulation when it was used as the title for this widely-cited article.).

16. *See id.*

17. *See* Robert K. Merton, *Opportunity Structure: The Emergence, Diffusion, and Differentiation of a Sociological Concept, 1930s–1950s*, in *THE LEGACY OF ANOMIE THEORY: ADVANCES IN CRIMINOLOGICAL THEORY* 25 (Freda Adler & William S. Laufer eds., 1995) (the term “opportunity structure” is a staple of the sociological literature).

18. *See* GEORGE C. GALSTER, AN ECONOMETRIC MODEL OF THE URBAN OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURE: CUMULATIVE CAUSATION AMONG CITY MARKETS, SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND UNDERSERVED AREAS 1–5 (1998); Gregory D. Squires & Charis E. Kubrin, *Privileged Places: Race, Uneven Development and Geography of Opportunity in Urban America*, 42 *URB. STUD.* 47, 47–63 (2005).

- (6) Is the private market, including families buying homes, developers building housing and other types of structuring, owners upgrading their properties, and businesses leasing or buying space, actively investing in the city, not just in a few prime locations such as the city's downtown, but widely across the city?

All older post-industrial cities are, in the final analysis, cities of neighborhoods. Although they may have high-density downtown areas, the greater part of the land area of cities such as St. Louis, Detroit, Cleveland, Philadelphia or Baltimore are made up of residential areas made up in turn of single family houses, which represent the overwhelming majority of the residential structures in these cities.¹⁹ The future of these neighborhoods hinges on the extent to which they are competitive for the regional pool of homebuyers, a pool that includes people who currently live in the neighborhood and are contemplating buying a home, residents throughout the region contemplating a move, and new arrivals to the region from elsewhere.²⁰ The extent to which a neighborhood is competitive depends in turn not only on the extent to which it offers buyers houses that are competitive in terms of price and quality, but the extent to which it offers potential buyers the features they are seeking in a community, not just a dwelling unit.²¹ While those features vary for different target populations, they can include safety, physical condition as reflected in the condition of houses or the presence of vacant, boarded structures, the quality of the local public schools, or the availability of public transportation.²²

The alternative to widely diffused neighborhood competitiveness is not likely to be a scenario in which *no* neighborhood is competitive, but rather one in which a few areas or neighborhoods are becoming increasingly competitive but that most of the city's neighborhoods are at best stagnating, and in many

19. Even after decades of attrition and demolition, based on the 2008-2012 American Community Survey as analyzed by the author, 92% of all the residential structures in Baltimore today are single-family homes, as are 81% in Cleveland. In Philadelphia and Baltimore, these houses usually take the form of brick row houses, while in the other cities they are most likely to be either brick or wood frame detached houses. Data available using *American Community Survey: Summary File*, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, http://www.census.gov/acs/www/data_documentation/summary_file (last visited Apr. 22, 2014) (calculations on file with author).

20. There is a growing literature on the importance of consumer choice and competition in neighborhood vitality. See, e.g., David Boehlke, *Preserving Healthy Neighborhoods: Market-Based Strategies for Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization*, in *REBUILDING AMERICA'S LEGACY CITIES: NEW DIRECTIONS FOR THE INDUSTRIAL HEARTLAND* 145-147 (Alan Mallach ed., 2012).

21. See, e.g., Sophia Stuart, *Factors Influencing Neighborhood Choice*, *ECONOMISTS' OUTLOOK BLOG* (April 7, 2011), <http://economistsoutlook.blogs.realtor.org/2011/04/07/factors-in-fluencing-neighborhood-choice>.

22. *Id.*

cases deteriorating, losing ground in their ability to hold or attract homeowners and working families.²³

By answering these questions, one can construct a plausible picture of what a sustainable city should look like. The following three descriptive statements represent a thumbnail picture of the sustainable city.

- The sustainable city is a center of economic activities, at a level capable of supporting a stable or growing population, that utilize its distinctive physical, institutional, cultural or other assets, that draw people or money from the region and beyond, that create job and business opportunities for a wide variety of the city's residents, and that reinforce demand for the city's built environment.
- The sustainable city's neighborhoods and other areas offer residents and visitors a quality of life standard such that the city's building stock is fully utilized and well-maintained, vacant buildings are restored to use, and vacant land is reused productively. Homeownership rates and homebuyer demand are high, and new construction, rehabilitation, and property improvement are actively pursued without need for public subsidy.
- The population of the sustainable city is economically, socially, and ethnically diverse, representing a healthy mixture of household types, income and educational levels, and a workforce that competes effectively in the regional economy. The city will still have poor people and lower-income households, but their share of the population is not disproportionate relative to regional and national norms, and the city's opportunity structures foster significant upward mobility.

The scope of the above description is limited to what might be called the operational dimensions of the sustainable city, those aspects of sustainability that can be quantified and measured, and for which the city's progress can be monitored. While many parameters, such as what constitutes an adequate quality of life standard, or a 'healthy' economic or demographic mix, cannot be defined without the exercise of some subjective judgment, even at their most subjective they represent objective categories. That is not quite enough.

A further dimension is equally fundamental to the good city in my judgment, which is what can loosely be called social cohesion. Social cohesion reflects the extent to which diverse social, economic, and racial populations in a city share a common identity and work together to sustain the city within a framework of broad democratic participation and shared power. While most post-industrial cities are economically and racially diverse from a purely

23. EBOOK OF ABSTRACTS, *supra* note 6.

statistical standpoint,²⁴ their diversity often reflects the existence of separate economic and racial communities that are isolated from, and often in conflict with, one another,²⁵ while democratic participation may be limited and power concentrated in few hands.²⁶ Ultimately, such a failure of cohesion is inconsistent with any plausible vision of the just or good city, and renders the sustainability project difficult if not impossible to achieve.

None of this is meant to portray the sustainable city in utopian terms as a place in which there is no poverty, no substandard housing, and, in the immortal words of Garrison Keillor, “all the children are above average.”²⁷ Cities and neighborhoods with older housing stocks are always likely to have more poor residents than their suburban neighbors.²⁸ A successful, sustainable city is not a city without poor or lower-income people; indeed, one could reasonably argue that a city without lower-income people is not a city in the general understanding of the term, but an enclave of privilege or a museum. As Glaeser points out, an important part of the historic role of a city is to be a port of entry traditionally for rural migrants, and today, often international immigrants, looking for opportunity.²⁹ The question for any particular city, however, is whether it is in fact a place of opportunity, or one where poor people languish with little hope of a better life.

Cities will always have problems. The issue is whether they are solving their problems; as Jane Jacobs, in her famous book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, wrote, a stable neighborhood is one “that keeps

24. While there are exceptions such as Detroit, whose population is overwhelmingly African-American, most cities show a more even distribution between white and African-American households, with Eastern cities also typically showing substantial Latino populations; examples include St. Louis (44% white, 49% African-American), Cleveland (37% white, 53% African-American), Buffalo (50% white, 39% African-American), and Cincinnati (49% white, 45% African-American). Data is accessible through the 2007-2011 *American Community Survey 5-year Estimate*, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/news_conferences/20121203_acs5yr.html (last visited Apr. 22, 2014) [hereinafter *ACS 5-year Estimates*] (analysis based on calculations by author).

25. See, e.g., DOUGLAS S. MASSEY & NANCY N. DENTON, *AMERICAN APARTHEID: SEGREGATION AND THE MAKING OF THE UNDERCLASS* 84-87 (1993).

26. See ROBERT A. DAHL, *WHO GOVERNS? DEMOCRACY AND POWER IN AN AMERICAN CITY* 1-7 (1961) (arguably the seminal work on urban power structures); *THEORIES OF URBAN POLITICS* 1-12 (David Judge et al. eds., 1995) (providing a multifaceted view reflecting different ways of looking at urban power structures).

27. *A Prairie Home Companion*, AM. PUB. MEDIA, <http://prairiehome.publicradio.org/about/podcast/> (last visited Apr. 22, 2014).

28. Median family incomes in more successful central cities are typically between 70-80% of metropolitan median family incomes, as in Boston (71%), Chicago (73%) or Minneapolis (78%); and between 55-65% in more distressed central cities, such as in Cleveland (54%), Baltimore (58%) or St. Louis (62%). See *ACS 5-year Estimates*, *supra* note 24.

29. See EDWARD GLAESER, *TRIUMPH OF THE CITY: HOW OUR GREATEST INVENTION MAKES US RICHER, SMARTER, GREENER, HEALTHIER, AND HAPPIER* 19-20 (2011).

sufficiently abreast of its problems so [that] it is not destroyed by them.”³⁰ Sustainability is as much a process as it is an outcome.

I do not use sustainable here as a synonym for successful. First, success is a problematic term to use with respect to a city in any event, as it implies a single trajectory with a final landing point. Urban revitalization and change are always contingent and provisional; while a city may make significant progress over a decade or more, that progress can always be reversed by social, economic or technological change, while, as I describe below with respect to St. Louis, that progress may be highly uneven. Second, by using the term sustainable, my intention is to suggest a further dimension to a city’s revitalization; namely, that it is grounded not in a single short-term improvement or stroke of good fortune, but that it is grounded in *systemic* change that is capable of sustaining improvement over time not only in the narrow economic sphere but with respect to the broader vision of a just city, and that gives the city the resilience to bounce back from the inevitable challenges that will arise and exert pressure on the city’s social and economic model.

A sustainable city may or may not have a growing population.³¹ Mayors and other officials in shrinking post-industrial cities, perhaps understandably, tend to place much emphasis on reversing population decline.³² While sustained population decline is strongly correlated with negative measures, such as poverty or property abandonment, population growth as such is not necessarily likely to lead to the converse; a number of American cities have stabilized their population or reversed decline without any associated improvement in their social or economic condition.³³ Sustainable population stabilization or regrowth is far more likely to take place as a product of sustained improvement in a city’s economy or quality of life than as a phenomenon unto itself.

ST. LOUIS AND THE UNEVEN COURSE OF REVITALIZATION

The challenge of sustainability comes through clearly in St. Louis, in many ways the archetypal post-industrial American city. It was a major center of industry and river trade from the nineteenth through the mid-twentieth

30. JANE JACOBS, *THE DEATH AND LIFE OF GREAT AMERICAN CITIES* 112 (1961).

31. The relationship between economic growth, particularly sustainable economic growth, and population growth is a matter of debate; for a useful recent commentary look to *Insight: Untangling Regional GDP and Population Growth*, MARTIN PROSPERITY INST. (June 6, 2013), <http://martinprosperity.org/2013/06/06/insight-untangling-regional-gdp-and-population-growth/>.

32. See, e.g., Julie Scharper, *Mayor’s goal: Bring 10,000 new families to city in a decade*, BALTIMORE SUN, Dec. 5, 2011, A1, available at http://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc3500/sc3520/014500/014500/pdf/sun_5dec2011.pdf.

33. A notable example of this is Reading, PA. See MALLACH, *supra* note 14.

centuries, becoming the nation's sixth-largest city in 1920.³⁴ St. Louis has lost over 60% of its population since reaching its peak in 1950, dropping from nearly 857,000 to 319,000 in the most recent census of 2010.³⁵ In many respects, however, St. Louis has rebounded dramatically from its decline. Washington Avenue, all but abandoned twenty years ago, has been heralded as "one of the most remarkable city center transformations in the nation"³⁶ and now regularly prompts descriptions like this: "If your image of shopping in downtown St. Louis conjures up images of dark empty streets and bargain shops with bars on the windows, then you haven't strolled down Washington Avenue recently. Completely renovated and now a thriving entertainment district, Washington Avenue is also coming alive with a wide range of designer shops, furniture stores and art galleries."³⁷ Barnes Jewish Hospital, with nearly 10,000 employees,³⁸ has become a nationally recognized medical institution, and a major economic anchor for the city. The Central West End neighborhood, after weathering some difficult times, has become a much sought-after area, where many houses sell for \$300,000 or more,³⁹ while the Old North neighborhood of St. Louis has been described by a nationally-known smart growth advocate as "one of the country's best revitalization stories."⁴⁰ Forest Park, a legacy of the city's nineteenth century boom years, is widely recognized as one of the nation's great urban parks.⁴¹

These are all matters in which the city's residents can justifiably take pride. And yet, there is another side to the picture. Despite these positive changes, St.

34. *Population of the 20 Largest U.S. Cities, 1900–2012*, INFOPLEASE, <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0922422.html> (last visited Apr. 22, 2014) (In 1960, St. Louis was still the tenth largest city in the United States, but by 1980 had dropped out of the top twenty entirely.).

35. *State & County Quick Facts: St. Louis, Missouri*, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/29/29510.html> (last visited Apr. 22, 2014).

36. *City of St. Louis, Missouri: Downtown Revival*, PARTNERS FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES, <http://www.livable.org/livability-resources/best-practices/245> (last visited Apr. 22, 2014).

37. David O'Brien, *Shopping Along Washington Avenue: Downtown St. Louis Continues to Attract New Stores*, ABOUT.COM, http://stlouis.about.com/od/shopping/tp/Washington_Avenue_Shopping.htm (last visited Apr. 22, 2014).

38. *Fact Sheet*, BARNES JEWISH HOSP., <http://www.barnesjewish.org/about/fact-sheet> (last visited Apr. 22, 2014).

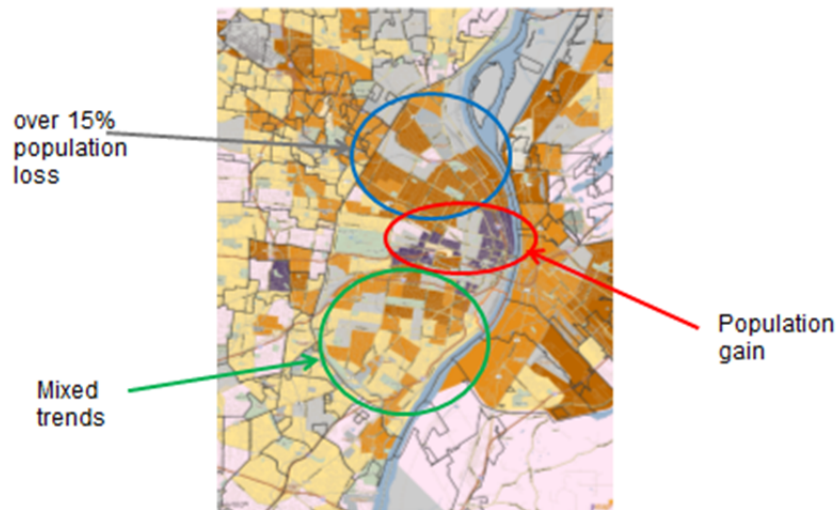
39. *Central West End Recently Sold Homes*, ZILLOW, http://www.zillow.com/homes/recently_sold/Central-West-End-Saint-Louis-MO/270188_rid/days_sort/38.655153,-90.228481,38.627667,-90.283842_rect/14_zm/ (last visited Apr. 22, 2014).

40. Kaid Benfield, *A Photo & Video Update on Old North St. Louis, One of the Country's Best Revitalization Stories*, SWITCHBOARD: NATURAL RES. DEF. COUNCIL STAFF BLOG (April 16, 2009), http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/kbenfield/a_photo_video_update_on_old_no.html.

41. Mary Warren, *Forest Park*, PROJECT FOR PUB. SPACES, https://www.pps.org/great_public_spaces/one?public_place_id=403&type_id=1 (last visited Apr. 22, 2014) (designating Forest Park as a "Great Public Space"); *2013 Great Places in America*, AMER. PLANNING ASS'N (2013), <https://www.planning.org/greatplaces/> (designating Forest Park as one of the Ten Great Public Spaces in America for 2013).

Louis as a whole is still losing population. As Figure 1 shows, this reflects extreme spatial disparities.

FIGURE 1
POPULATION CHANGE IN ST. LOUIS 2000–2010



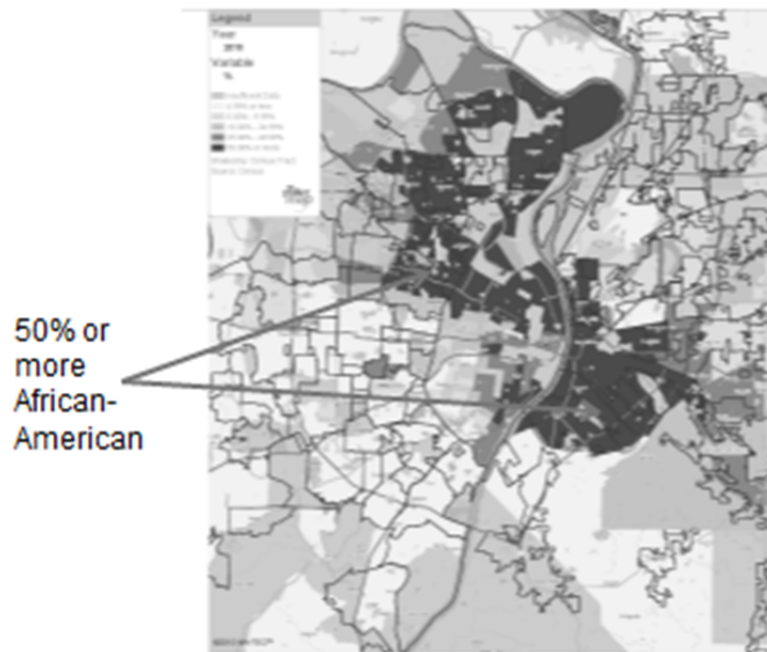
Map courtesy of TRF POLICYMAP, <http://www.policymap.com/> (last visited Apr. 22, 2014) (map obtained through subscription of author). Author's calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau data from 2000 to 2010.

People may be moving into downtown St. Louis and into a few other areas near downtown or along the central corridor running from the Mississippi River to Forest Park, but most other parts of the city, particularly the North Side, are continuing to lose population, and experiencing widespread deterioration and abandonment.⁴² To some extent, this reflects continued racial disparities. Although matters have changed since the days when Delmar Boulevard was seen as a Berlin Wall of separation between the city's white and black populations,⁴³ St. Louis continues to be a highly segregated city, as shown in Figure 2.

42. *Id.*

43. See, e.g., COLIN GORDON, MAPPING DECLINE: ST. LOUIS AND THE FATE OF THE AMERICAN CITY 86 (2008). But see Deb Peterson, *BBC News Video Focuses on Delmar Boulevard as the Area's 'Dividing Line,'* ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH, March 14, 2012, available at http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/columns/deb-peterson/bbc-news-video-focuses-on-delmar-boulevard-as-the-area/article_9a3cfbd2-6e27-11e1-b1f0-0019bb30f31a.html.

FIGURE 2
AFRICAN-AMERICAN POPULATION CONCENTRATIONS IN
ST. LOUIS 2010



Map courtesy of TRF POLICYMAP, <http://www.policymap.com/> (last visited Apr. 22, 2014) (map obtained through subscription of author). Author's calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau data from 2000 to 2010.

St. Louis is still a poor city relative to both its region and the nation as a whole.⁴⁴ That reflects many decades of economic decline and will not change overnight. The question posed here is not about that historic reality, but whether the progress that is visible in recent years is taking St. Louis on a path toward becoming a healthy, sustainable city in the future, or whether it is instead increasing historic disparities, and arguably leading the city toward a new, perhaps different but equally problematic future.

While the scope of this essay does not permit an exhaustive look at this question, I will present information for some critical areas which suggests, indeed, that as St. Louis has begun to see significant revitalization, the effect has been to exacerbate rather than reduce those disparities.

44. *State & County QuickFacts: St. Louis, Missouri*, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/gfd/states/29/2965000.html> (last visited Apr. 22, 2014).

St. Louis contains nearly 217,000 jobs, a relatively large job base compared to its resident workforce, resulting in a significant net inflow of workers to the city.⁴⁵ During the past decade, while many central cities have lost jobs, St. Louis has held its own, actually increasing the number of jobs in the city, albeit by less than 1%, between 2002 and 2011.⁴⁶ Two questions, however, are important: where are these jobs, and who holds them?

Jobs in St. Louis today are heavily concentrated in the city's central corridor, with over half of the city's jobs concentrated in roughly 3% of the city's land area, as shown in Figure 3 below. Moreover, between 2002 and 2010, the number of jobs in the corridor grew by 11%, while the number in the rest of the city declined by 9%.⁴⁷

This is a significant change from historical patterns. St. Louis contained nearly 173,000 manufacturing jobs in 1947,⁴⁸ compared to fewer than 18,000 in 2011.⁴⁹ In 1950, 34% of the city's workforce was employed in manufacturing,⁵⁰ compared to 7.7% in 2011 and 8% today.⁵¹ Manufacturing firms were widely dispersed around the city, often in close proximity to working-class residential neighborhoods, as were large numbers of the secondary retail and service establishments which served the city's manufacturing workers and their families.⁵²

Although most of the city's manufacturing base is long gone, the concentration effects are continuing; between 2002 and 2010, the number of jobs in the central corridor increased by over 10,000, while the number of jobs in the rest of the city declined by a comparable amount.⁵³

45. See *infra* Table 1 (showing that the number of jobs in the city exceeds the resident employed workforce by over 50%).

46. See *Work Area Profile Analysis*, ONTHEMAP.COM, <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/> (last visited Apr. 22, 2014) (analysis based on author's calculations). During the same period Cleveland lost 2% of its job base, Buffalo 4%, Cincinnati 11%, and Detroit 16%. *Id.*

47. *Id.* (calculations on file with author).

48. *1947 Census of Manufacturing*, UNIV. OF VA. LIBR. (2007), <http://www2.lib.virginia.edu/ccdb/> (click "City Data"; then select "Missouri"; then select "St. Louis"; then select "Number of Manufacturing Establishment Employees, 1947").

49. U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, 2011 COUNTY BUSINESS PATTERNS & 2011 BUSINESS PATTERNS (May 16, 2013), http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=BP_2011_00A1&prodType=table.

50. *1954 Census of Manufacturing*, UNIV. OF VA. LIBR. (2007), <http://www2.lib.virginia.edu/ccdb/> (click "City Data"; then select "Missouri"; then select "St. Louis"; then select "Percent Employed in Manufacturing, 1950").

51. See *Work Area Profile Analysis*, ONTHEMAP.COM, <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/> (last visited Apr. 22, 2014) (type "St. Louis City, MO" in the search box; then select "search"; then click "Perform Analysis on Selection Area" then click "Go!").

52. CUMBLER, *supra* note 14 (illustrating that the economic geography of cities during their industrial heyday has not been as extensively explored as it should be); DOUGLAS W. RAE, CITY: URBANISM AND ITS END 100–11 (2003).

53. See *supra* Figure 3.

TABLE 1
EMPLOYMENT CHANGE IN ST. LOUIS 2002–2011

	2002		2011		Change 2002-2011	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
City jobs held by city residents	66965	31%	53584	24%	- 13381	- 20%
City jobs held by commuters	148264	69%	163402	76%	+ 15138	+ 10%
Total jobs in city	215229	100%	216986	100%	+ 1767	+ 1%
City residents working in city	66965	- 48%	53584	- 44%	- 13381	- 20%
City residents working outside city	73220	- 52%	67995	- 56%	- 5225	- 7%
Total working city residents	140185	100%	121597	100%	- 18588	- 13%

Data collected from *OnTheMap*, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov> (last visited Apr. 22, 2014) (analysis performed by author) (calculations on file with author).

As the table shows, between 2002 and 2011, the number of city residents working in the city dropped by 20%; at the same time, the number of commuters to jobs in the city increased by 10%, to the point where more than three out of four city jobs were held by commuters. While over half of city residents are reverse commuters, working outside of the city, their numbers too dropped between 2002 and 2011.

In a nutshell, the central corridor is growing steadily, fueled by a workforce that is increasingly dominated by commuters, while the rest of the city—with scattered exceptions—is losing both jobs and working residents. It appears that St. Louis as an *economic* city, that part of the city that generates

jobs, income, and public revenues, is being increasingly uncoupled from the city as a *geographic, political, or demographic* entity. I will return later to the implications of this trend.

This shift has a pervasively racial character. In contrast to many other American cities, St. Louis has drawn few immigrants in recent decades; as of 2011, 93% of the city's population was either non-Latino white or African-American.⁵⁴ Paralleling the spatial shift in St. Louis' economy, disparities in the relative condition of the city's white and African-American populations have dramatically increased. Part of this reflects a sharp increase in the in-migration of white households into St. Louis, reversing the pattern of previous decades. During recent years, the average annual number of white in-migrants from outside Missouri into the city has averaged 5.6% of the existing white population base, or nearly 4 times the in-migration rate of black households into the city.⁵⁵ During the decade from 2000 and 2010, the number of white residents aged 25 to 34 increased by 5,000, while the number of African-Americans in the same age group declined by over 3,000.⁵⁶ There appears to be evidence that out-migration has included a significant part of the city's African-American middle class. One indication of this comes from homeownership data; between 2000 and 2010, the number of African-American households in St. Louis declined by 9%, but the number of African-American homeowners dropped by 17%.⁵⁷

Two indicators of the growing racial disparity in St. Louis that are particularly significant in terms of the city's economy are educational attainment and household income. As Table 2 illustrates, the gap between white and African-American households has widened during the past decade into something resembling a chasm.

54. U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, ACS DEMOGRAPHIC AND HOUSING ESTIMATES: 2007–2011 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 5-YEAR ESTIMATES (2011), *available at* http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_5YR_DP05.

55. U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, GEOGRAPHIC MOBILITY BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS IN THE UNITED STATES: 2007–2011 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 5-YEAR ESTIMATES (2011), *available at* http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_5YR_S0701&prodType=table. This is not net immigration, which is much lower, as large numbers of white households also continue to leave the city.

56. *See* U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, 2000 CENSUS; U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, 2010 CENSUS.

57. *Id.*

TABLE 2
RACIAL DISPARITIES IN ST. LOUIS

ST. LOUIS	MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (change in constant dollars)				EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (% of adults >25 with BA/BS or higher degree)	
	WHITE	AFRICAN- AMERICAN			WHITE	AFRICAN- AMERICAN
				1990	13.7%	8.0%
1990- 2000	+ 8.0%	+12.1%		2000	28.2%	8.8%
2000- 2011	+ 7.4%	-12.3%		2011	42.0%	11.7%
UNITED STATES						
2000- 2011	- 3.0%	- 7.5%		2011	31.3%	18.0%

See U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, 2000 CENSUS; U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, 1990 CENSUS; U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, 2007–2011 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 5-YEAR ESTIMATES (2011), *available at* http://www.census.gov/acs/www/data_documentation/summary_file.

Reflecting the contrasting trends described above, the median income for African-American households in St. Louis declined from 62% of the white median in 2000 to barely 50% of the white median in 2011.⁵⁸ The median income for African-Americans in 2011 was only \$23,866, only modestly above the poverty level.⁵⁹ This was not the continuation of a long-term trend of increasing racial disparity, but a reversal of the trend of the decade from 1990 to 2000, during which the gap narrowed, albeit only slightly.⁶⁰

58. *Id.*

59. *Id.*; U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, MEDIAN INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (IN 2011 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS): 2007–2011 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 5-YEAR ESTIMATES (2011), http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_5YR_S1903&prodType=table.

60. Specifically, the median household income for African-American households in St. Louis was 60% of the white median in 1990, rising to 62% in 2000, and then falling to 51% in 2011. Author's calculations based on data from the 1990 and 2000 CENSUS, and 2007–2011

Table 2 shows figures for the United States as well as for St. Louis.⁶¹ While there are significant disparities nationally between white and African-Americans, the gap in St. Louis, with respect to both income trends and disparities, and disparities in educational attainment, is far greater than the national gap.⁶² The fact that white household incomes grew significantly in constant dollars during the past decade – in contrast to the national trend – is a reflection of the significant in-migration and revitalization taking place in St. Louis; at the same time, the drop in African-American incomes shows that they did not benefit proportionately from those changes.

If the income disparities reflect current conditions, the disparities in educational attainment reflect both current conditions and future potential. With a job base increasingly oriented toward work demanding high levels of education and specialized skills, people with limited education are at an increasing disadvantage. Although African-Americans make up roughly half of St. Louis' adult population they hold only one-quarter of the jobs in the city; even among those who both hold jobs and live in the city, African-Americans make up only 40%.⁶³ Lack of educational attainment is likely to perpetuate and exacerbate economic and racial disparities far into the future.

St. Louis appears to be embarked on a bipolar path: one in which a few areas, largely the central corridor and a few nearby neighborhoods, are increasingly successful, the city's jobs and wealth are increasingly concentrated in those areas, and most of the rest of the city is left behind. Indeed, one could argue that today St. Louis' central corridor, with its predominately commuter workforce, is more closely linked, socially and economically, to affluent suburbs like Clayton and University City on the other side of Forest Park than to the rest of the city. While St. Louis is building a new export-oriented economy largely on the basis of its educational and medical institutions,⁶⁴ it seems doubtful that that new economy is significantly benefiting long-term residents of the city, or that the city's institutions are effectively preparing its residents to be competitive with respect to the jobs being created, either within the city or throughout the region. Although my inquiry has not explicitly addressed the state of St. Louis' neighborhoods, they show a similarly uneven picture. While areas like the Central West End and

American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2011). Pattern held true for seven of eight major American cities studied by the author. *Id.*

61. *See supra* Table 2.

62. *See supra* Table 2.

63. U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, *supra* note 54; U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, ONTHEMAP, <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov> (last visited Apr. 22, 2014) (analysis performed by author).

64. RICHARD ROSENFELD, *HIDDEN ASSETS: CONNECTING THE PAST TO THE FUTURE OF ST. LOUIS* xi–xii (Richard Rosenfeld ed., 2006). These are export-oriented institutions, not in the literal sense of producing export goods, but in the sense that they serve regional and even national markets, drawing money into the city from outside.

Lafayette Square have become highly desirable, and Old North appears on its way to revival fueled by in-migration, many other areas to both the south and north of the corridor continue to decline.

THE CHALLENGE OF SUSTAINABILITY

The trends that I have described above are the product of many different forces working in the complex systems making up the city, and are hardly likely to reflect conspiracy or deliberate intent on anyone's part. Moreover, there is no reason to believe that if the revitalization currently taking place in the central corridor was *not* taking place, things would be any better for the rest of the city, its neighborhoods, and its lower-income residents. Matters would be no different, and quite possibly worse. Assuming that my analysis is correct, and much of the growing disparity is being driven by the parallel in-migration of an affluent young white population and out-migration of the African-American middle class, these are forces that are hardly unique to St. Louis. They are reinforced, moreover, by larger demographic trends, particularly the rise of the so-called millennial generation, people born since 1980, with their affinity for high-density urban living,⁶⁵ and the parallel decline in the number of married-couple child rearing households, the demographic segment that historically provided the social and economic underpinning for the city's neighborhoods outside the central core, as reflected in the fact that in 1960, well over half of the households in St. Louis were married couples, and one out of every three households was a married couple raising children, while in 2011, less than a quarter of the households in St. Louis are married couples, and the share of married couples raising children is one out of ten.⁶⁶ Even if nothing else were happening in the city, that fact alone would place many of St. Louis' single-family residential neighborhoods at risk.

From what might be considered a neoliberal perspective, there is arguably little to fault with St. Louis' economic trajectory.⁶⁷ The market is working.

65. See Matt Bevilacqua, *Millennials Have Overrun Philadelphia*, NEXT CITY (Mar. 25, 2013), <http://nextcity.org/daily/entry/philadelphia-millennials-pew-state-of-the-city-population-gain> (describing the effect that this group is having on another city).

66. More precisely, in 1960, 56% of all households in St. Louis were married-couple households, and 32% were married-couples raising children. Author's calculation based on data from the 1960 CENSUS. By 2011, the percentage of married-couple households had dropped to 24%, and the percentage raising children to 9%. U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, SELECTED SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS IN THE UNITED STATES: 2007–2011 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 5-YEAR ESTIMATES (2011), http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_5YR_DP02.

67. Neoliberalism can generally be characterized as the return to free market principles in the economy. See JASON HACKWORTH, *THE NEOLIBERAL CITY: GOVERNANCE, IDEOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT IN AMERICAN URBANISM* 9 (2007) (further defining neoliberalism as “an ideological rejection of egalitarian liberalism in general and the Keynesian welfare state in

Jobs are growing in those parts of the city with the greatest competitive advantage, and the employers are maximizing the quality of their workforce by recruiting from throughout the region. Washington Avenue has become a vibrant hub of activity, and those neighborhoods with the greatest competitive advantage are reviving. The city is drawing young people who bring skills, talent, and energy. Longer-term middle-class families, both white and African-American, are acting in their rational self-interest and moving out of a city that, from their perspective, is not competitive with suburban jurisdictions with respect to the quality of services it offers, or the fiscal and psychological costs it imposes.⁶⁸

Although the neoliberal paradigm is widely favored by both private and public sector policy makers in twenty-first century America, it is not the only framework through which one can look at a city.⁶⁹ It is a perspective that privileges individual, free market activity over all other activities, and fails to recognize the many complex ways in which the different sectors of a city, or a society, are interconnected. It attributes little or no value to core principles such as democracy, opportunity,⁷⁰ and social cohesion that have long been part of the American tradition. I would argue that a city that does not promote these principles, by both word and deed, is failing its residents in important respects, and cannot claim the title of a sustainable city.

One particularly notable feature of St. Louis' revival is the extent to which it appears to have come about far less as the product of a broad or comprehensive strategy or through strong centralized leadership or partnerships, but through the separate and only intermittently connected efforts of individuals, businesses, institutions, neighborhood organizations and

particular, combined with a selective return to the ideas of classical liberalism, most strongly articulated by Hayek (citation omitted) and Friedman (citation omitted) . . . [who] argued that government should be used only sparingly and in very specific circumstances, rather than interfering within the marketplace.”).

68. The flight of the African-American middle class from urban areas in recent decades has been the subject of considerable media attention. *See, e.g.*, Tom Ferrick, Jr., *Black Exodus: Part One*, METROPOLIS (Oct. 7, 2011, 5:32 PM), <http://www.phlmetropolis.com/2011/10/black-exodus.php> (describing the flight of the African-American middle class from Philadelphia); Alex P. Kellogg, *Black Flight Hits Detroit*, WALL ST. J., June 5–6, 2010, at A1 (describing black flight from Detroit). A short discussion of the same phenomenon in St. Louis has yet to receive the scholarly attention it demands. *See* Christopher Orlet, *Wanted: An Urban Black Middle Class*, AM. SPECTATOR (July 25, 2013, 6:08 AM), <http://spectator.org/archives/2013/07/25/wanted-an-urban-black-middle-c>.

69. *See, e.g.*, DAVID HARVEY, A BRIEF HISTORY OF NEOLIBERALISM 2–3 (2005) (“[t]here has everywhere been an emphatic turn towards neoliberalism in political-economic practices and thinking since the 1970s. Deregulation, privatization, and withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision have been all too common.”).

70. *See* Dag Einar Thorsen, *The Neoliberal Challenge: What is Neoliberalism?*, 2 CONTEMP. READINGS L. & SOC. JUST. 158, 188 (2010) (describing neoliberalism).

developers.⁷¹ The city's experience over the past decade illustrates the power of those efforts, but also the limits. For St. Louis, or any other city, to go beyond those limits, and become a just, sustainable city, will take not more of the same, but a fundamentally different way of thinking about change. Such a different way of thinking would look at the city as a whole, and bring people from all parts of St. Louis together to frame a larger vision for the city's future, one that is democratic, diverse and equitable both in its underlying principles and in the manner in which it is turned into reality.

71. It is hard, if not impossible, to document this, but this was the consensus of a number of informants with whom I have discussed this subject.

